

VIII. *Some Remarks occasioned by the preceding Paper, addressed to the ROYAL SOCIETY by Mr. William Watson, Apothecary, and F.R.S.*

GENTLEMEN,

Read Nov. 17.
1743.

THE Reverend Mr. *Pickering* having at your last Meeting laid before you an ingenious Account, and shewn you, by the Assistance of a Microscope, the Seeds of Two Sorts of *Fungus's*, which were imagined, by many present, to have been undiscovered before; I hope I shall not be thought to detract from that learned Gentleman's Merit, if I mention the first Observer of those minute Bodies, although till now they never have, to my Knowledge, been shewn in *England*: For, however great my Zeal is to give the Honour of any Discovery to my own Countrymen, yet Candour will not permit me to give it them to the Prejudice of those of another Nation. It was to the late *Sigr. Micheli*, Professor of Botany at *Florence*, that the World owes the Discovery of the Seeds of Mushrooms, as well as the Flowers and Seeds of the various Species of *Licken* or *Liverwort*: He not only saw with his Glasses, but raised from their Seeds, many Kinds of Mushrooms, as may be seen from his Experiments in Page 135. of his incomparable Work intituled, *Nova plantarum Genera*, printed at *Florence* in the Year 1729. He constantly observed the Seeds produce the same Species, as in the more perfect Plants.

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A very worthy and learned Member of this SOCIETY, Dr. *Haller*, Professor of Physic, Botany, &c. in the University of *Gottingen*, in his excellent Work published last Year, intituled, *Enumeratio Methodica Stirpium Helvetiæ*, tells us, when treating of *Fungus's*, Page 34. that their Seeds are produced in the *Laminæ* of their concave Side; as he has most evidently seen in the 35th, 50th, 73d, 93d, and 107th Species mentioned in his Work; which Seeds are by Nature, when ripe, shaken from the Plants, and, being sown, propagate their Species. He likewise mentions, that the Seeds of different Mushrooms vary in their Colour, some being blue, others green, white, &c.

That Ornament of this SOCIETY, the late Mr. *Ray*, indeed, mentions a *Fungus*, discovered by his Friend Mr. *Doody*, which he calls, in his History of Plants, Vol. III. Page 21. *Fungus seminifer externè striatus*; and Monsieur *Tournefort*, in his *Institutiones Rei Herbariæ*, Page 560. takes notice of another Species of this Tribe, which he calls *Fungoides infundibuliforme semine fætum*. Monsieur *Vaillant*, in Page 57. of his *Botanicum Parisiense*, gives a Description and Figures of the Seeds of these Two Kinds. His Words are to this Purport, when translated from the *French*.
 “ Within the Cavity, says he, of these Plants, towards
 “ the Bottom, are contained many Seeds heaped one
 “ upon another, cut upon their superior Surface
 “ somewhat like a Triangle, broad underneath, where
 “ they are connected to a little Tendon, and are
 “ whitish.” Notwithstanding the high Veneration I have for the Opinions of these able Botanists, I am satisfied the Parts of these Two Plants, so imagined,
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are not their Seeds, but rather their Suckers, *Stolones*; which; in most others of this Tribe, are produced from the Root; but from both these, as in many of the Kinds of *Lichen*, and in the *Dentaria bulbifera*, are produced from other Parts of the Plant. I cannot help observing, that in almost all Plants, whose Seeds are produced sparingly, or are difficult to be saved, Nature abundantly makes up that Deficiency by the great Increase of their Roots, whereby their Species may easily be propagated; as is manifest in Mushrooms, Potatoes, Crocus's, Golden-rods, Starworts, and above all in the *Corona Solis, flore parvo, tuberosa radice*, of M. *Tournefort*, vulgarly called *Jerusalem Artichokes*, the Seeds of which, from the Shortness of our Summer, having never as yet ripened in *England*. I shall only add, that although many Species of Mushrooms are eatable, and some of them better flavoured than the common Sort, the Gardeners only propagate that Sort with red Gills, called, by way of Excellence, *Champignon*, a Name given by the *French* to all sorts of Mushrooms; but some descriptive Word is added to them, whereby they may be distinguished from this. The Method of propagating Mushrooms according to the usual Practice, *viz.* from their Suckers, was first mentioned by *La Brosse*, in his Treatise *De la Nature des Plantes*, and afterwards by Monsieur *Tournefort* in the *Memoirs of the Academy of Sciences, Anno 1707. Page 72.* I am, GENTLEMEN,

With great Respect,

Nov. 17. 1743.

Your most obedient,

Humble Servant,

William Watson.

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